Slow Food®

Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

Slow Food Uganda

With the support of the
Intesa Sanpaolo Fund for charitable,
social and cultural donations

Uganda
From Earth to Table

Traditional Products and Dishes

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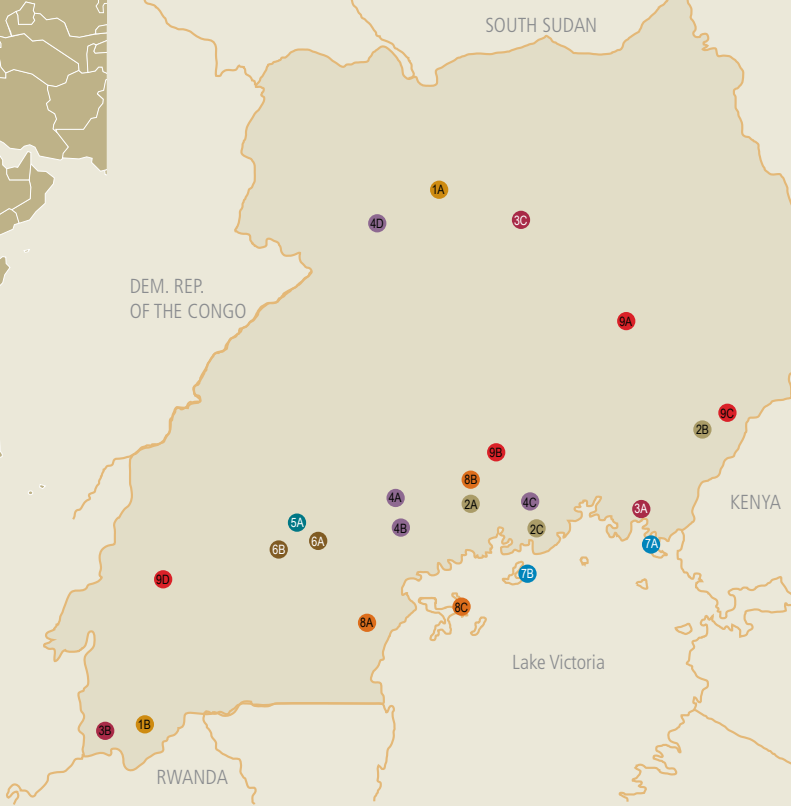
The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity and Intesa Sanpaolo are working together to develop the Slow Food network in Uganda, creating gardens and Presidia and initiating many other activities with food communities.

The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity thanks the Slow Food network in Uganda for its collaboration and recipes.

With this publication, Slow Food wants to promote local products and traditional recipes from around Uganda.



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INTRODUCTION

Journalist, anthropologist and cultural promoter Madjeng Sek was one of the very first Slow Food members in Africa, and the convivium leader in Dakar for many years. Already 15 years ago he was saying that the nascent middle class in Senegal ate French at breakfast (croissants, baguettes, jam, butter), American at lunch (hamburgers and fries) and Italian at dinner (pasta). In other words, everything but African. And these choices were not based on food preferences as much as a kind of affirmation of status that involved the suppression of the simple, humble foods of traditional local cuisine. For us Foreigness travelling in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, it has never been easy to get an idea of African cuisine. In the hotels and restaurants with some level of comfort, the cooking was – and unfortunately still is in most places – a kind of paraphrase of so-called international cuisine, with imported ingredients and seasonings. The restaurants that offered something more than a mixed plate of meat and vegetables were and still are very few, and none of them bothered to try and include even a minimum of local foods. Without the opportunity to eat in a family home, it was, and still is, very hard to form an impression of the local cuisine.

Can we say that now, after 15 years, the situation has improved in any appreciable way? Yes, something is changing. There is a very slow, but constant, shift. Restaurants are opening that are proud to serve traditional recipes, and, thanks in part to the Slow Food Presidia, we are seeing the formation of communities of farmers and fishers with an increasing awareness of the value of their work and the importance of preserving food biodiversity in their local area. A growing contingent of young people in many sub-Saharan countries have had the chance to get to know the Slow Food gardens, and have come into contact in some way with local species and varieties. These young people will be able to voice new demands and to reject the social and economic domination of imported foods. I repeat, this is a slow process, but it is taking place.

To ensure that this movement lays solid foundations and can spread in the best possible way, populations must understand what still remains in their area that is specific, local and traditional. Young people don't need to go to cooking school or follow university courses – welcome though that is. Much progress can still be made with less effort. For example, by contributing to the inventory of species, varieties, breeds and fish that still live in their country. And that is exactly what this book wants to do, to make available to anyone who believes it is right to "eat local" a practical guide to the food

heritage of the country where they live. Africa is not a land of processed foods, but a land where one can still grasp the sublime simplicity of a grain, the unique nature of a herb, the distinctive flavour of meat from an animal fed only on grass and hay. A gastronomic quest should start from here, from this feeling of ancient purity that this book wants to capture.

This is the starting point for the Slow Food network in Uganda, which, under the leadership of the young Edward Mukiibi, a Slow Food International vice-president, is travelling around the country, interviewing women and elderly farmers, cataloguing products and knowledge, creating community and school food gardens, establishing Presidia (for local varieties of coffee, bananas, yams and more) and organizing Earth Markets.

This extraordinary work, the result of the enthusiasm, passion and experience of many young people from the Ugandan Slow Food network, has been made possible thanks to the important contribution of Intesa San Paolo.

Piero Sardo
President of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

In this book we give the scientific name for every plant and animal: one or two Latin words used to distinguish its genus and species. These terms are useful because they are shared by the international scientific community and they allow plants an animals to be easily identified. The local names are the result of research carried out by the Terra Madre network, and they vary from region to region and from village to village. Thats why were only listed the most common.

"Gifted by Nature" is our national slogan, and indeed Uganda is the richest among East African countries in terms of biodiversity and proud to be one of the countries with the most diverse foods in the world. The truth is that a vote of thanks is owed to the local, traditional and indigenous food species and the great caretaking skills shown by the small-scale peasant and artisan producers practicing traditional farming systems in different regions of the country.

From east to west, north to south, Uganda – the Pearl of Africa – is endowed with a range of climates and environments that encourage the flourishing of diverse forms of both flora and fauna: macro and micro, terrestrial and aquatic. The same conditions are ideal for the farming of a wide range of indigenous African species that have supported local communities through tough times. In Uganda, as in other African countries, there are specific crops for each season, an edible insect for every time of the year and animals adapted to every specific type of vegetation, altitude and climate. All these products are closely linked to the culture, traditions and beliefs of the Ugandan people. The country's 40-plus ethnic groups are all united by one important asset: diversity. Slow Food is working to defend the complex diversity of Ugandan foods by promoting the "Gifted by Nature" slogan from a food perspective.

This book is the first in a series by Slow Food Uganda, published by Slow Food International, highlighting some of the major food products that form the rich diversity of the Pearl of Africa.

The main aim of this handbook is to draw attention to some unique foods and related recipes from different cultures and regions in Uganda, taking into account traditional farming systems and agroecological zones. Since biodiversity is the foundation of food and life, we must put more emphasis on preserving our rich food biodiversity if we are to sustainably feed the growing population, and this kind of documentation is of vital importance.

The most crucial aspect is that the text here represents a collective contribution made by experts, small-scale producers, cooks and chefs, elderly men and women as well as young people from all regions of the country, with the hope that the information will be widely shared and used by individuals, chefs, farmers, food experts and nutritionists, among others, in order to help build a diversified food system, a prerequisite for a better, more diversified and more nutritious diet in Uganda and Africa in general.

Edward Mukiibi,
Vice-President of Slow Food International and President of Slow Food Uganda

SLOW FOOD UGANDA

Slow Food is an international association with members in over 160 countries around the world, promoting access to good, clean and fair food for everyone. Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and as a result bring about great change.

Slow Food is active in Uganda with a network of over 300 food activists organized in 14 convivia (local chapters). Our activities are aimed at protecting local food biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture and raising awareness among consumers about the importance of local healthy food consumption. Active members are small-scale producers, cooks (through the Slow Food Chefs' Alliance , teachers, students, agronomists, journalists, academics and many others from a wide range of different backgrounds, each enriching the network with their experience. All together, they form the Terra Madre communities of Uganda, the people who care for our natural resources.
In particular, the Slow Food network in Uganda is implementing the following projects:

Presidia projects that support quality food production at risk of extinction, protect unique regions and ecosystems, recover traditional processing methods and safeguard native breeds and local plant varieties.

10,000 Gardens in Africa a project that uses farmer ownership to empower African food communities to achieve food sovereignty and security. Over 130 school and community gardens have been established in Uganda so far, managed by local women, men and children of all ages.

Ark of Taste a catalogue of traditional foods at risk of extinction.

Earth Markets farmers' markets where food producers come to sell locally produced, seasonal foods.

Slow Food Youth Network a network of young people linked to the Slow Food philosophy and activities, including the Food Academy, which educates the world's future leaders, entrepreneurs, farmers and consumers.

1 GRAINS

Several of Uganda's traditional grains, now neglected, could become major contributors to the well-being of communities around the country. Alongside the few grains known countrywide, there exist a huge number of other native grains and food plants that have been feeding people for thousands of years. Over 100 native grain seeds are being, or have been, eaten in East Africa, but in modern times only a handful are given attention by researchers and the development industry, and even those few are largely underappreciated. Despite being ignored and judged less useful than wheat, rice or maize, Uganda's indigenous grains have the potential to make an essential contribution to keeping the country fed.

Finger millet

Local names: obulo in central Uganda, oburo in the west, ajuma in the Teso language in the east, kan in the north

Scientific name: Eleusine coracana

Finger millet is one of the most important traditional grains in Uganda, where farmers have been cultivating it for thousands of years. Finger millet is a tufted annual grass that grows to a height of between 40 and 130 centimetres and takes roughly 6 months to mature. It has narrow graminaceous leaves and many tillers and branches. The head consists of a group of digitately arranged spikes. Finger millet is one of the most important and nutritious cereal grains in northern Uganda, rich in methionine, an amino acid known to be lacking in a number of staple diets in the area. It serves not only as a staple food crop, but is also an important source of income for rural women who process and turn it into fermented and non-fermented beverages. The civil war in northern Uganda posed a serious threat to the native finger millet varieties and led to the introduction new fast-growing varieties, which do not provide consistent yields once replanted or trimmed. Slow Food is working with food communities in northern and northeastern Uganda (where the Teso people prepare a millet bread called atapa and a fermented millet brew called ajono) to preserve the native variety of finger millet.

▶ Finger Millet Porridge (Bushera/Ekitiribita)

Ingredients for 4 people
125 g finger millet flour
500 ml cold water
2 litres boiling water
sugar

Method

In a clean bowl, thoroughly mix the finger millet flour with cold water until a uniform brown liquid is obtained. Pour the mixture into the boiling water and continue to cook, stirring, for about 7 minutes. Add sugar to taste if desired and serve either warm or cold.

Note: Bushera millet porridge is normally prepared for breakfast or for the evenings in Uganda. Milk is sometimes added to the porridge to enhance its taste.

Sorghum

Local names: muwemba in central Uganda, mugusha in the southwest
Scientific name: Sorghum bicolor

A vigorous cane-like grass, approximately 5 metres tall, sorghum comes in many varieties in Uganda, most of which are annual. Its leaves look much like those of maize and a single plant will have between 7 and 12 leaves depending on the cultivar. The flower head is usually a compact panicle, and each head carries two types of flowers, one sessile, with both female and male parts, and the other pedunculate and usually male. Sorghum grains are smaller than those of maize but have a similar starchy endosperm. Like millet, sorghum is also one of the most important traditional grains of Uganda. It features in many staple dishes in northern Uganda and is also used in a number of ceremonial beverages in southwestern, central and northern Uganda. Over the years, sorghum-growing regions have developed traditional processing methods that seek to improve the nutritional value and palatability of sorghum products, which are derived from a number of cultivars. Slow Food is working with food communities around Lira in northern Uganda and around Kabale in southwestern Uganda to preserve traditional local sorghum varieties and their products.

▶ Matured Sorghum Porridge

Ingredients for 4 people
clean filtered water
500 g sorghum flour

Method

In a clean kettle, bring 2 litres of water to boil. In a bowl, mix the sorghum flour into cold water and stir until there are no lumps left (it is normal for some particles to remain). Put a saucepan on the fire and add the hot water from the kettle. Pour the mixture from the bowl into the saucepan and continue stirring until the colour of the porridge changes to black and a foamy liquid starts rising to the top. Pour the hot porridge into a medium-sized pot and dilute it with cold clean water. Cover the porridge and let sit for 12 hours. After this time the porridge is ready for consumption. There is no need to add sugar.
Note: Serve at any time, especially after a meal.

2 STAPLES

Uganda is home to a wide variety of little-known crops. Traditionally, each region and ethnic group gives value to a specific staple food as a base crop. For example, green bananas play an essential role in the central region, while cassava is a staple for people living in West Nile, bamboo shoots are equally important to easterners of the Mt. Elgon area and, of course, if one visits Kabale in the southwest they will most certainly eat sorghum. This diversity of staple foods along with the commitment and hard work of small-scale farmers has made Uganda a food basket, not only for its own dense population but also for neighboring countries. This is also thanks to the region's fertile soil and reliable rainfall, which lead to high food productivity. A wealth of knowledge about staple foods in different regions has historically been of great importance to those living in Uganda.

Green Bananas

Local name: Matooke
Scientific name: Musa

Over 50 cultivars of bananas, including Nakitembe, Musakala, Muvubo, Kibuzi, Namwezi, Mbwe Zirume, Njoogabakazi and Nfuuka, to name a few, are traditionally the major source of food in central Uganda. At the same time, the sale of fresh bananas as well as their various products is a source of income for communities and contributes to raising their standard of living. This easily digested staple produces more food for the same cost than any other fresh fruit or vegetable or even fish, meat or eggs. The individual fruits are about 6 centimetres long, depending on the cultivar or variety, and have a dark green peel. Bananas represent food security for households in the central and western parts of the country, and in the Baganda culture, the Nakitembe variety is ceremonially presented by the groom to the bride's family during traditional marriage ceremonies. The bananas are generally harvested before they become fully ripe, when they contain more starch and less sugar. Delicious and highly nutritious, the bananas can be used in a number of ways: steamed, baked, boiled, fried, served as chips, French fried and so on. The banana is a high-power fuel producer for the body, besides being rich in beneficial salts and base-forming minerals and of great value as a food for children. The ripe matooke can be steamed in their peels and served as desserts and are also popular with children.

Staple foods like bananas - of which there are hundreds of traditional varieties - are replaced by hybrid plants or even fruits that have been created in a laboratory.
The most fertile land is sold to big foreign investors for commercial monocultures like palm oil, maize or coffee, while forestry and water resources are given to third parties to manage, not the local communities.
Exotic breeds like Friesian cattle are promoted, along with standardized tastes (instant coffee, a few fish species, artificial fruit juices)

▶ Katogo

Ingredients for 4 people
2 clusters of matooke bananas
500 g groundnut paste or 500 g cow or goat offal or 500 g fresh beans (any kind)
1 onion
2 tomatoes
salt
cooking oil

Method

Peel the banana fingers and set them aside, properly covered.
Prepare the sauce: For groundnuts, dissolve the groundnut paste in 250 ml of water in a bowl. In a separate saucepan, bring water to the boil then add the diluted groundnut paste and add the onion and tomatoes, chopped, directly into the sauce. Add the banana fingers then cook over low heat for about 30 minutes, adding salt to taste.
For offals, clean the offals and cut it into cubes, then boil them in water until they are soft. Chop the onion and tomatoes and fry them in a little cooking oil, then add the offal and banana fingers, add water to cover the bananas and cook until the bananas are soft, adding salt to taste.
For beans, boil the beans in water until they are soft and ready. In a separate saucepan, fry the chopped onion and tomatoes in a little oil. Once the tomatoes are soft, add the cooked beans and the banana fingers in layers to ensure a uniform mix. Cook until the bananas are soft, adding salt to taste.
Note: Katogo is usually prepared for breakfast or a light dinner.

Eat locally!
Cultivating, breeding and eating local food is good for the economy because it supports small-scale producers, is often healthier as produce is fresher, and is good for communities as it gives them pride in their heritage and territory, and safeguards local food traditions.

Dried Bamboo Shoots

Local name: malewa in Lugisu/Lumasaba, eastern Uganda
Scientific name: Xanthosoma sagittifolium

Malewa, a traditional Gishu treat, is a highly cherished dish among the Bagishu living on Masaaba (Mount Elgon) in Uganda's Eastern region. Malewa is a unique delicacy that has been eaten for over 3,000 years. The Bantu-speaking tribes in the Eastern Mountains have also adopted the dish and for those that love attending ceremonies like circumcisions, weddings, graduations and others where buffets are prepared, the party is not complete unless malewa is served. Once boiled, malewa can be eaten on its own but can also serve as a sauce to complement most dishes, which is particularly popular among the Bagishu living around Mbale, Sironko, Bududa, Manafwa and Bulambuli. Matooke and malewa remain inseparable at most meals prepared in the region. The harvesting is normally done in May and June on the higher slopes of Masaaba where young bamboo plants are dug out using a hand hoe. Malewa can be eaten when fresh but the fresh shoots have a very short shelf life and cannot be kept in the household for long. To improve the shelf life, the traditional method of preserving malewa involves beating the bamboo shoots to crush and flatten them, then smoking them for about 6 hours.

▶ Malewa with Groundnuts

Ingredients for 4 people
3 malewa shoots
250 g groundnut paste
1 piece rock salt
salt

Method

Soak the malewa in a saucepan of water for about 30 minutes, then put the saucepan on the fire and heat for about 10 minutes. Wait for the water to cool and remove the malewa. In a bowl, wash the malewa thoroughly in cold water to remove the smoke coating, making sure the malewa turns from black to cream or light brown in colour. In another bowl dissolve the groundnut paste in cold water. Cut the malewa joints off the shoots and chop the middle parts into smaller pieces. Place them in a saucepan, adding a cup of water and some rock salt to make the malewa more tender. Place on the heat and leave to boil for about 20 minutes. Finally, add the dissolved groundnut and salt to taste and let the sauce simmer gently to develop the flavour. Remove from the heat and serve hot or cold.
Note: Malewa can be eaten raw, steamed or boiled. It is best served with matooke, sweet potatoes, posho, rice or cassava.

African Bitter Yams

Local names: balugu and ndaggu in central Uganda
Scientific name: Dioscorea dumetorum

Uganda is home to numerous ecotypes of climbing yams, which have more than ten different local names that are used depending on their morphological and physiological structures. The climbing vine known as balugu has been cultivated in Uganda for generations, and grows up to 6 to 8 meters tall. It is traditionally cultivated in the Bukunja-Mukono district but has now spread to many other parts of the country. The root tubers grow in a bunch or on their own, and can weigh up to 80 kilos. Their flesh is white or pale or dark yellow. Traditionally, the tuber is consumed steamed and served with beans, groundnuts and vegetables. requires thorough boiling or sun-drying to remove its toxic constituents before eating. Different commonly cultivated varieties of balugu include Kyetutumula (the most common), Luyiki, Nandigoya, Mukulu Jjuuni, Kisebe and Kikongo among others, and other climbing yams include Ndaggu (Nganda), Ndaggu (Nsowe) and Ndaggu (Nziba). Other edible varieties like Kaama are yet to be not domesticated because the deep-growing tubers are difficult to harvest.

▶ Steamed Climbing Yams

Ingredients for 4 people
5 kg climbing yams
2 banana leaves
water

Method

Do not peel the climbing yams, but wash thoroughly and wrap in banana leaf. Pour some water in a saucepan, put in the banana leaf petiole and midribs, locally known as emizingonyo, to create a base, and cover with banana leaf. Place the wrapped climbing yam into the saucepan and cover well with more banana leaf and another saucepan. Place the pan on the heat and steam for up to two hours. Remove from heat, unwrap and peel the yams.
Note: Serve hot or cold with any desired accompaniment, for example a thick sauce of beef, fish, chicken, beans or vegetables.

3 VEGETABLES AND PULSES

The world outside of Uganda knows little about the country's traditional vegetables and pulses. These plants are characterized by their nutritional qualities and have the potential to boost food sovereignty. Vegetables and pulses in Uganda are grown on a small scale, mainly for domestic consumption. The country is home to a wide variety of vegetables and legumes native to tropical Africa, and some are still gathered from the wild for local use. They generally thrive in the well-drained fertile soil of cultivated fields, home gardens, waste dumps and along the slopes of trenches with a sunny exposure. These crops make good accompaniments for staple foods like cassava, potatoes and yams.

Groundnuts

Local names: binyebwa in central Uganda and maido in the east
Scientific name: Arachis hypogaea

Unlike in other countries where groundnuts (peanuts) are eaten as snacks or as a condiment, in Uganda they are an integral part of everyday meals. Groundnut paste is used to prepare different dishes at home and for special events, functions and traditional ceremonies. The most delicious traditional dish, very exotic to foreign visitors, is groundnut luwombo. Luwombo is a traditional Buganda cooking method of steaming stews wrapped in packets made from scorched banana leaves, tied with banana fibres. This cooking method dates back to 1887, during the reign of Ssekabaka Mwanga, when it was introduced to the royal table by Kawunta, the king's personal chef at the time, and officially launched as one of the royal food preparation methods. Luwombo is a fairly common method these days, used especially during holidays. It is well known across central Uganda and is now spreading to other parts of the country. Examples of common types of luwombo include groundnut and dry or smoked fish, mushroom, smoked meat and a plain groundnut version which is particularly delicious.

▶ Groundnut and Mushroom Luwombo

Ingredients for 3 medium-size mpombo (plural of luwombo)
young banana leaves
250 g clean mushrooms
500 g groundnut paste (crushed groundnuts)
1 onion
3 tomatoes
2 garlic cloves
30 g curry powder
1 tsp salt
banana fibres

Method

Cut off the petiole and the entire midrib of the banana leaves, scorch the now clean banana leaf laminas on an open fire for a few seconds and set them aside.
In a bowl, soak the mushrooms in cold water and in another bowl, dissolve the groundnut paste in cold water.
Chop the onion, tomatoes and garlic into very small pieces. Set the scorched banana leaves in a bowl one after the other, put in the mushrooms followed by the tomatoes, onions, garlic and curry powder in reasonable amounts. Add a little salt and pour in the groundnut. Wrap up and tie to close with a banana fibre.
Prepare a saucepan: add water and set in the petiole and midribs previously cut from the banana leaves. Arrange them in such a way that they support the mpombo, avoiding contact with water. Cover them with another fresh banana leaf and set the mpombo on top. Cover everything with three or four fresh banana leaves and put on the fire to start steaming.
Cook for about an hour and serve with steamed green bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, yam or any food of your choice.

Pumpkin

Local names: essunsa or ensujju in Luganda, obututu in Banyankole, igihaza in Rufumbira
Scientific name: Curcubita maxima

Pumpkins grow in most parts of Uganda, used as a cover crop to protect the soil from erosion and moisture evaporation. It is believed that crops intercropped with pumpkins give a higher yield. Different regions have different varieties of pumpkins. Southwestern Uganda has two main varieties of pumpkin: Edegede is round in shape and has an army green colour; it tends to grow bigger in size than any other pumpkin. Igihwanya is small in size and turns yellow or orange when ripe. Both are cooked after being cut in pieces, and served with beans. A pumpkin called Igihaza grows in the south, on the border between Uganda and Congo; its name derives from the Rufumbira word guhaga, meaning satisfaction. As in the rest of the Uganda, the Bafumbira people in the Kisoro district also traditionally eat pumpkins and use the leaves in a sauce. The Baganda people in central Uganda also cook the very young pumpkins called obuguju, mixed with pumpkin leaves (essunsa) and other leafy vegetables. The leaves can be cut into small pieces, boiled and mashed with beans to make a sauce known as igusasa in Rufumbira or essunsa in Luganda. Pumpkin seeds (ebiryo) are also used in traditional Uganda cuisine, either fried and eaten as a snack or steamed and served on the side of a plate of pumpkin pieces. For centuries, mashed steamed pumpkins have been used as a baby food, often mixed with beans or fish soup. It is believed that children fed on pumpkins will be brighter and have better eyesight.

Cowpea

Local names: empindi in central Uganda, mashaza in the west and eggobe in the east
Scientific name: Vigna unguiculata

Commonly known as a crop cultivated by women, the cowpea is a drought-tolerant, heat-adapted annual herbaceous legume, predominately self-pollinated although a slight amount of outcross may occur depending on the cultivar and location. Cowpeas thrive across the vast stretch of land with low levels of rainfall where the typical sandy soils are poor in nutrients and organic matter. The peas develop within elongated pods of about 18 to 25 centimetres long, called enkaaga. One pod could contain 10 to 15 seeds, depending on its length. Cowpeas serve different purposes according to the regions: in the Central region, apart from being one of the totems of the major clans of the Buganda Kingdom, the seeds are used to prepare soups and sometimes the fresh pods are steamed and eaten as a side vegetable. In the Eastern region, the seeds and leaves are also eaten as a vegetable. In the Northern region, the cowpea leaves, known as boo, are the main delicacy, while the most outstanding cowpea dish across the Central and Eastern regions is called ggobe. This plant is an important source of protein for resource-poor farmers as well as an essential component of cropping systems. It is a crop of major importance to the nutrition of poor rural households in the drier regions of Uganda, where diets tend to rely heavily on starchy foods such as millet, sorghum, maize and cassava. It is consumed both as a pulse and a vegetable, and the local rural women make several soups using the cowpeas. The cowpea occupies an economically important place among pulses, especially in the Eastern and Northern regions where it is an important source of protein and household income for the resource-poor subsistence farmers.

▶ Cowpea Leaf and Groundnut Soup

Ingredients for 4 people
300 g cowpea leaves
300 ml salted water
4-5 tbsps cooking oil
2 medium-sized onions, chopped
3 medium-sized tomatoes, chopped
250 g groundnut paste

Method

Neatly pluck the whole cowpea leaves from the stems and wash them thoroughly to remove all soil particles. Pour the salted water into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the cowpea leaves, boil for about 20 to 30 minutes and then remove from the heat. In another clean saucepan, add the cooking oil and chopped onions and fry until golden brown. Add the tomatoes and let fry until they fall apart, adding some salt to taste. Add the boiled cowpea leaves and stir to combine. Place the groundnut paste in a bowl, add water and stir to thin the paste. Add the diluted groundnut paste to the cowpea mixture and simmer for 15 minutes. Best served with millet posho (a thick mush).

Note: Cowpea leaves are quite tough and just boiling them in water may not be enough to soften them, so the lake salt from Lake Katwe (*kisula*) helps to tenderise them. People commonly buy it in shops or markets for cooking such greens. Traditionally, this material was unavailable and people could either use dried banana peels, or even bean pods fot the same purpose.

4 LEAFY GREENS

Uganda's edible botanical wealth offers great promise for its future. Many of Uganda's little-known indigenous plants have such outstanding qualities that they could resolve some of the country's – and Africa's – most pressing food problems. These plants are rich in nutrients compared to other fruits and vegetables. Knowledge about what can and cannot be eaten is generally passed through the generations from mother to daughter. This direct personal tutoring is effective but it can be hard to take advantage of it.

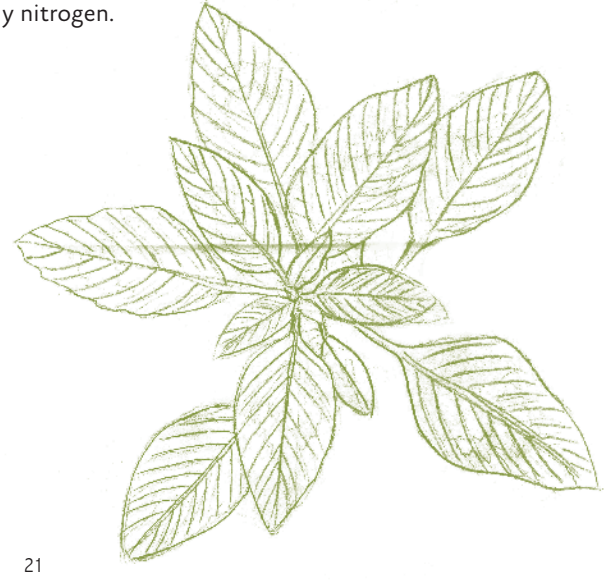
Uganda's leafy vegetables (say, dooodo, bbga, ...) come from a wide variety of plants, varying from region to region and also depending on ethnic diversity, but they are normally cooked in similar ways. Most leafy vegetables are measured in bundles, mugs or in pieces. Some are ground into powder for special culinary purposes and preservation.

Amaranthus Spinach Tricolor (Purple, Green and Red)

Local names: ebbuga and doodo in the central Uganda, eboga in Teso
Scientific name: Amaranthus lividus / dubius

Purple amaranth is leafy vegetable long cultivated in Uganda, grown for its edible purple leaves which are believed to have specific nutritional and health benefits. Commonly known as bbuga, the purple amaranth is a fast-growing, erect annual tropical plant that can reach a height of 2 metres. It is characterized by branched stems with alternating spikes topped by small bright-red flowers. The seeds are very small but easy to harvest, and the purple leaves are steamed on top of food or prepared like spinach, chopped and boiled or fried. The leaves have a mild flavour and are rich in vitamins and minerals.
Green amaranth is another leafy vegetable that has been grown in Uganda since ancient times, and is still grown today on a small scale for its tasty green leaves. The erect annual tropical plant is commonly harvested at a height of 20 centimetres but is sometimes left to grow to 60 centimetres tall for the purpose of seed production. Its leaves and young seedlings are normally steamed or prepared like spinach, sometimes added to soups and occasionally eaten raw. It has a smooth, mild flavour.
All of these amaranth types can survive in dry conditions but grow well in moderate pH soils with a high concentration of major nutrients, especially nitrogen.

Traditional varieties of fruits and vegetables have adapted over the centuries to the local climate and soil conditions. This makes them more resistant, and they don't need chemical inputs (fertilizers and pesticides) to flourish. They cost less and are better for our health and the environment.



Spider Weed

Local names: ejjobyo in central Uganda
Scientific name: Gynandropsis gynandra

If you have always been fascinated by the world of vegetables, then you are probably familiar with spider weed. Just like purple, green or red amaranth, spider weed is another leafy vegetable commonly used to accompany other dishes. In Uganda it is prepared by steaming or boiling together with other ingredients to make a soup with a sour taste. When steamed, it is eaten as a starter or side dish with most of the major staples. Spider weed is very common in eastern and central Uganda where it also serves medicinal purposes. Also locally called ejjobyo or eyobyo, spider weed is one of the indigenous African vegetables that can survive with little or no attention and is considered to be one of the most nutritious vegetables. A short herbaceous plant (approximately 50 centimetres), it has small white flowers that produce small black seeds in soft, rough-skinned pods.

▶ Spider Weed or Amaranth Side Dish

Ingredients for 4 people
1.5 kg spider weed or green/purple amaranth leaves
1 banana leaf
pinch of baking powder
salt

Method

Wash and chop the leaves. Wrap them in a banana leaf and, for the spider weed leaves, add a pinch of baking powder to help soften them. Steam them with or on top of another food like bananas or sweet potatoes. Add a pinch of salt once ready. Serve as a cooked salad.

Cocoyam Leaves

Local name: ttimpa in Central Uganda
Scientific name: Colocasia esculenta

Cocoyams are tuber crops found mostly throughout central and eastern Uganda. They are two main types of cocoyam, the arrow yams locally called bwayise, cultivated in the wetlands, and the upland cocoyams (Xanthasoma spp) locally known as koona or lukalaga mpiri, among other names. The upland variety is more of a biannual crop and is drought resistant, with the tubers the only commonly edible parts of the crop. The annual wetland cocoyams known as bwayise (arrowroots) take about 7 to 9 months to mature and both the leaves and the tubers are eaten. The edible leaves of the arrow yams have no slit near the stalk and normally have a purple dot in the middle of the leaf, but there are some varieties common in Mbale (on the slopes of Mount Elgon) that are entirely bright green without the purple dot. Only the young leaves are harvested for use as a vegetable and mostly cooked with groundnut paste to make a thick soup that can be served with most of Uganda's staple foods.

▶ Ttimpa in Groundnut Soup

Ingredients for 4 people
500 g young cocoyam leaves
1 banana leaf
salt
250 g groundnut paste
500 g cold water

Method

Wrap the young cocoyam leaves in the banana leaf and steam until soft. The cocoyam leaves can also be steamed on top of other foods like bananas and potatoes. On the side, prepare the groundnut by dissolving the groundnut paste into cold water and then and boil until ready. Mash the cocoyam leaves, add to the prepared groundnut sauce and serve.
Note: Salt can be added to the groundnut sauce before adding the cocoyam leaves.

Roselle

Local names: malakwang

Scientific name: Hibiscus sabdariffa

Malakwang belongs to the Malvaceae family of plants and is typical of northern Uganda, where the Ancholi people live. It is a drought-resistant herbaceous plant that grows to about a metre high. It is a very traditional and popular vegetable that is commonly used to thicken sauces. Traditionally malakwang was never served at traditional wedding ceremonies because it was believed that serving it would mean that the marriage would not last, but it was treated as a precious vegetable and served to in-laws when they visited the married couple at home. Because of its bitter taste malakwang is usually cooked with groundnut or sesame paste.

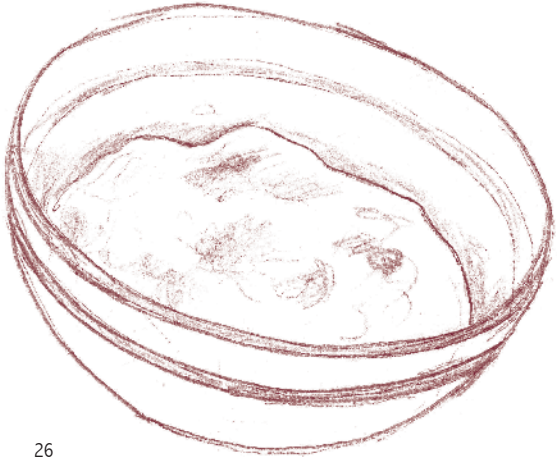
5 CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

One of the most extensively used herbs in Uganda is clove or African basil. Many of the country's herbs, spices, condiments and seasonings come from tropical plants, mostly grown in the Central region, with the exception of ghee (clarified butter), an animal product made from the milk of Ankole long-horned cattle in the Western region, along the cattle corridor. Seasonings (like the hot birdseye chilli which is usually served in a very spicy sauce called kamulali in Luganda) are added to food to complement or enhance the dish's flavour and can also be used for preserving or medicinal purposes.

Clarified Butter (Ghee)

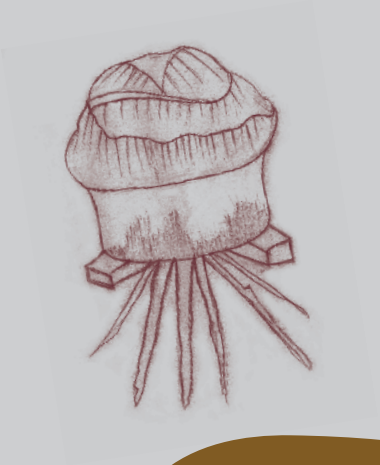
Local name: muzigo in Luganda, majuta in Runyankole

Ankole cattle, also known as Inyambo in Rwanda, are reared in the Rift Valley along the border between Uganda and Rwanda (though some are also found in Burundi) in a semi-arid strip often called the "cattle corridor". This rustic breed is raised for both its meat and milk. Among the culture of the Ankole people, the milk is handled mainly by the women in a special building called orugyegye. This is where the milk is collected, cooled and processed. The milk is stored in kyanzi, carved vessels made from black smoked wood from the mugawu tree, while for yogurt and ghee dried calabash are used. Both the kyanzi and the calabash are closed with beautiful caps handmade from woven fibers with geometric decorations. The milk has a high fat content and is processed into ghee (clarified butter) where milk is sieved, boiled and left to rest overnight. The cream is removed and transferred into a calabash for churning. Formed ghee is then separated from the residual liquid, put in a saucepan with clean water and washed. The final product has a shelf life of more than six months. As well, milk is transformed into yoghurt (amakano or bongo in Banyakole) by the women in the community. Some of the processed milk production is reserved for home consumption in traditional dishes like eshabwe and nunire (ghee sauce with rock salt used to season vegetables, matooke and rice), while the surplus is sold to local shops and vendors. Ntsimbo is the best type of ghee for making eshabwe.



6 ANIMAL BREEDS

Uganda is one of the African countries where the agriculture sector is dominated by a mix of small-holder farmers and pastoralists. Animal farming dates back to ancient times, when communities kept goats, chicken, sheep and cows for manure, meat, skins and milk (from cows only). Uganda boasts of a number of indigenous livestock breeds, including local native poultry breeds, Zebu and Ankole Long-Honed cattle and Mubende and other goats, including lowland and highland breeds, which play a very important identity-forming role among communities and different cultural groups.



Local breeds are hardier and need less attention, because over the centuries they're adapted to the territory and climate. Local breeds and their products (like milk, meat or wool) are an asset to local communities and must be preserved.

Mubende Goat

Local name: mbuzi in central Uganda
Scientific name: Capra hircus

The Mubende goat has straight, shiny hair, normally black or a mixture of black and white. Males have manes, and are usually hornless. Adult males weigh 25 to 35 kilos and females weigh 22 to 28 kilos. Like other native goats, this breed can survive well during times of drought and is resistant to heartwater (a tick-borne disease), worms and other diseases such as mange. It is believed that this breed was domesticated in the Mubende and Sembabule districts of central Uganda by communities of subsistence herders. Mubende goat meat is of high quality and generally consumed on special occasions. Its skin is also used for leather by the tanning industry.

▶ Goat Mukyomo

Ingredients for 4 people
800 g goat meat
20 g ground ginger
20 g ground garlic
20 g mixed spices of choice
salt
1 lemon

Method

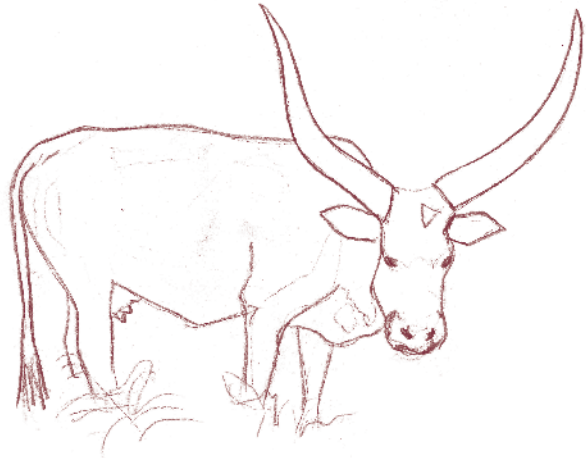
Chop the meat into cubes. Put the meat cubes into a clean bowl, then add in the ginger, garlic, spices, salt and lemon juice. Mix with your hands until combined. Let sit for 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare your grill with hot charcoal. Thread the meat cubes onto grilling sticks and start roasting gently. Once ready, serve with banana mpogola (green bananas steamed, unpeeled) and salads.

Ankole Long-Horned Cattle

Local names: Ente zeny'Ankole in Runyankole and Banyoro-Hima-Hema, Nte Nyakole or Ensagala in Luganda, Nyankore or Inyankore in Runyankole
Scientific name: Bos taurus

Ankole long-horned cattle (also known as Inyambo, Inkuku and Inka Ntutsi in Rwanda and Burundi) have a dark brown coat and long white horns that curve outwards then up, forming the shape of a lyre. It is a majestic and elegant animal, able to travel long distances in search of pasture and water. Thanks to its impressive horns (almost six times longer than European cattle breeds), it was once considered the incarnation of divine beauty. The Ankole cow still has a sacred role in the communities that depend on it, serving as a maternal figure and used as currency and for gifts. The cattle strengthen social relationships, and their elegance is celebrated in poems and songs. For farmers, the time of day is named for the animals' habits: the morning is "grazing time" and the evening is "home time".
Ankole beef is very tasty, and common cuts at the slaughterhouse include head, neck, hump, akafumito (the chest), enkoggo (the point at which the tail of the cow starts – one of the very special cuts at the local butchers, soft and tender and popular for stews and barbecuing) and molokoni (the lower part of the legs). The blood (eshagama) is also used as an ingredient in local cuisine.

The Slow Food Presidia are communities of producers who work together and decide how to produce and promote their products. Their objective is to save local breeds, plant varieties and quality artisanal food products at risk of disappearing. Together, the Presidia producers promote the local area, preserve traditional techniques and knowledge and develop sustainable cultivation and farming techniques.



▶ Beef Luwombo

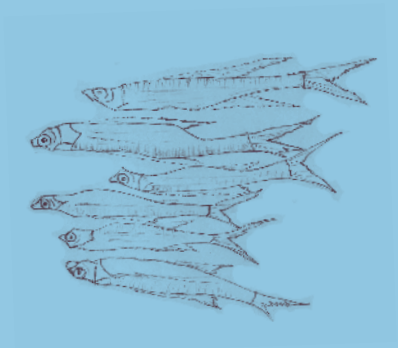
Ingredients for 3 medium-size mpombo (plural of luwombo)
500 g beef
young banana leaves
banana fibres
3 tomatoes
1 onion
1 garlic clove
2 tsps curry powder
100 g salt

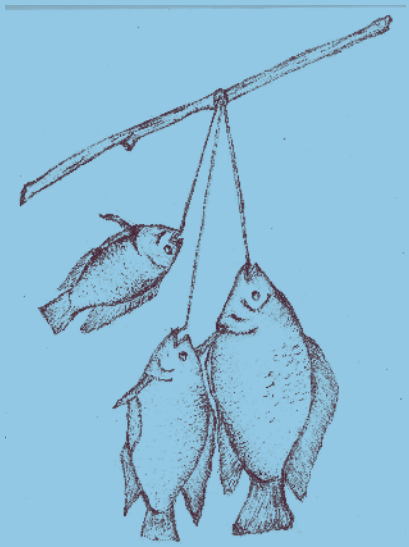
Method

Roast the beef until it is very dry and cut it into cubes. Prepare the banana leaves by cutting off the petiole and the entire midrib, then scorch the now clean banana leaf laminas on an open fire for a few seconds and set them aside. Chop the onion, tomatoes and garlic into very small pieces. Set the scorched banana leaves in a bowl one after the other and set in the meat cubes followed by the tomatoes, onions, garlic and a reasonable amount of curry powder. Wrap up and tie closed with a banana fibre.
Prepare a saucepan: add water and set in the petiole and midribs previously cut from the banana leaves. Arrange them in such a way that they support the mpombo, avoiding contact with the water. Cover them with another fresh banana leaf and set the mpombo on top. Cover everything with three or four fresh banana leaves and put on the fire to start steaming.
Cook for about an hour and serve with steamed green bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, yam or any food of your choice.

7 FISH

Uganda is gifted with many lakes, including Lake Victoria (shared with Tanzania and Kenya), Lake Kyoga in Soroti, Lake Albert in Pakwach, Lake Edward and Lake George and Lake Wamala in Mityana, as well as various navigable rivers where fish dwell. Communities living along these bodies of water carry out lake, river or swamp fishing as their main economic and social activity. Traditional fishing practices and equipment are still used, with great respect for nature and the water resources. Men take their pirogues to cast nets or baskets (for river and swamp fisheries) at night, then draw them in the next morning. Women tend to process the catch, using smoking and drying techniques, while a good amount of the catch will be prepared fresh in stews and soups. The most common species include tilapia, catfish, Nile perch and silver fish from the lakes, while the river catch mainly includes angara from the West Nile and ningu, nzeere, nsonzi and nkolongo, among others. Uganda is suffering from lake grabbing and wetland grabbing from rich fishing and mining investors in the name of development and illegal fishing carried out by big fishing boats. Communities are left with limited opportunities and resources and some important species are facing extinction.



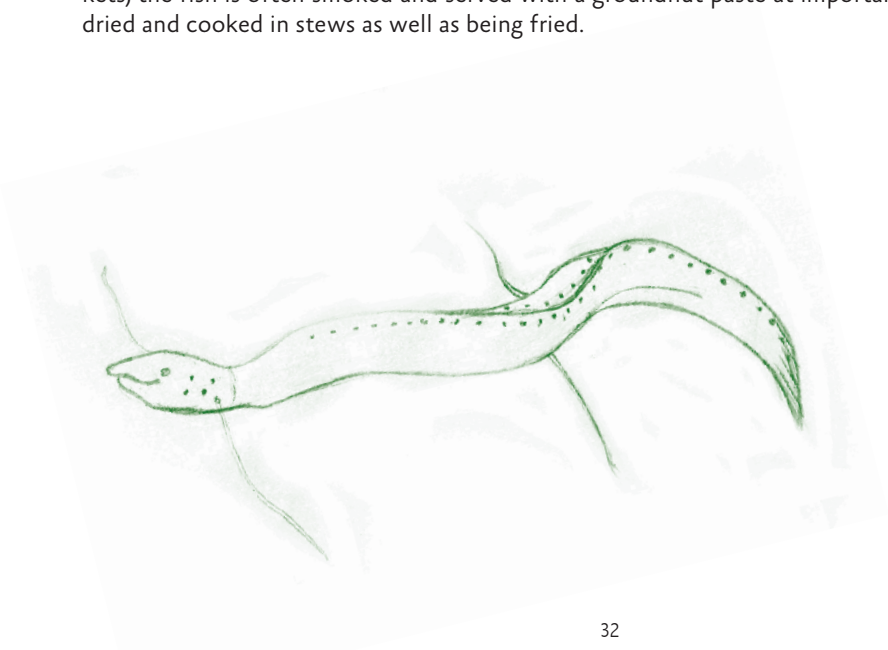


African Lungfish

Local name: mamba

Scientific name: Protopterus annectens

Known as mamba in Uganda, the African lungfish is believed to be endemic to Lake Victoria in eastern Uganda but can also be found in shallow streams, swamps and marshes. It is strongly connected to the Ganda and Soga people of central and eastern Uganda respectively, and this fish is one of the oldest totems belonging to the original clans of the Buganda Kingdom. The elongated, eel-like, scale-less fish can either swim like an eel or crawl along the lake's bottom using its pectoral and pelvic fins. One unusual characteristic of this fish is that it can live for several months out of water, in burrows of hardened mud in dried-up streambeds. These fish feed on a diet of crustaceans, aquatic insect larvae and molluscs. The fishermen say that during the dry season, the fish goes into hibernation and starts feeding on its own fins until more food is available. Caught for personal use and for sale at local markets, the fish is often smoked and served with a groundnut paste at important events; it may also be dried and cooked in stews as well as being fried.

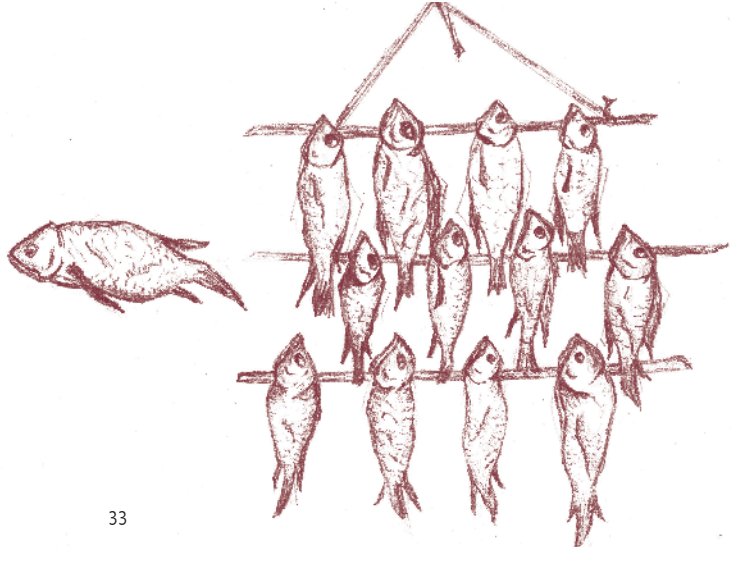


Sprat

Local name: nkejje

Scientific name: Sprattus sprattus

This traditional, small, broad-bodied fish has scales all over its body. It lives in both the deep and shallow parts of Lake Victoria, in relatively low numbers compared to other types of fish. Today, overfishing in Lake Victoria for export purposes, pollution and the introduction of Nile perch have led to a drop in the nkejje population and the destruction of their habitats. Mature fish are about 6 centimetres from head to tail and about 3 centimetres wide depending on the breed: for example, the Madoola are the largest and shiniest type of nkejje. In many communities, especially among the middle class and elites, it is considered an inferior fish with lots of bones. However, its high protein and calcium content helps to prevent malnutrition. Nkejje is dried directly under the sun immediately after being caught, and since they are caught in groups, they are all dried together, pinned on sticks in horizontal rows. After several days of drying, they are then taken to the market on the same sticks used for drying. The nkejje are commonly served in groundnut paste after a little roasting over an open fire. They play a very important cultural role in the Buganda Kingdom, especially during child initiation and confirmation ceremonies.



8 INSECTS

There are hundreds of types of edible insects throughout the country and the type and method of eating varies from one region to another depending on cultural beliefs. For many centuries edible insects formed a great part of the diets of many Ugandan communities and provided an immeasurable nutritional contribution. They have always been considered an alternative protein source for many people in different areas. Edible insects are more popular in central Uganda, the Lake Victoria islands and in eastern Uganda, where many of them like Kamanofe ants and bee larvae (bugishu) and several breeds of grasshoppers, winged termites, palm weevils and crickets are common.

Grasshopper

Local names: nssenene in central Uganda, isanani in the southwest
Scientific name: Orthoptera caelifera

To a typical person from central Uganda, nseenene means more than just edible insects. They represent community relationships, honesty and sharing. The main grasshopper season is in the month of November (Museene) and the light season is in May (Biswamugosi). Grasshoppers are also one of the totems in the Buganda Kingdom. To the Bafumbira in the southwest of Uganda, nseenene are known as isanani and are harvested by the women for their husbands as sign of love and respect. They normally appear in large numbers during the early morning hours and especially when there is some drizzly rain, and were traditionally collected by the whole community. In central Uganda, once one person spotted the nseenene flying in the bush he had to invite the whole community to join him through a signal called wuuli. The harvested nseenene were collected in bundles and delivered to the individual collection troughs called nkanga. Though today commercial harvesting commonly uses LED lights, which are shone into the sky at night. Nseenene are now seen as a money-maker because of the great market demand in major towns of Uganda and not much emphasis is put on the cultural and traditional value embedded in these tasty and harmless insects.

They are three common types of nseenene, differentiated mainly according to their size and morphological appearance: 1) Kulunkalu (Central region) is brown in colour and looks like a dry banana leaf (lusansa), the origin of its second name, Kulusansa, while among the Bafumbira it is known as Rukwi because it looks like a dry split of firewood; 2) Kulumbisi is green in colour like a fresh banana leaf, the origin of its second name Kululagala, while to the Bafumbira it is known as Cyasti because it is as green as grass; 3) Kibazzi has a green and purple stripe on the wings as well as purple on the legs and is the rarest so it is believed to come with good luck of collecting and picking more of this variety of grasshoppers.

▶ Roasted Grasshoppers

Ingredients for 4 people
2 kg grasshoppers
3 tsps salt
1 tomato, chopped
1 onion, chopped
wood ash

Method

After catching the grasshoppers, clean them thoroughly by removing all the wings, legs and the hair-like tail fin. To make this work easier, first dip all the insects into wood ash and remove them one by one as you clean. Wash the insects until clean and free from ash. Place a clean saucepan on the fire and drop in the grasshoppers then stir continuously for about 15 minutes. Sprinkle them with salt, add the chopped tomatoes and onions, then stir continuously for about 10 minutes. They are then ready to serve.

Winged Termites (White Ants)

Local names: nsswa

Scientific name: Macrotermes bellicosus

Winged termites – also known as white ants – are edible flying insects at risk of disappearance because of increasing urbanization and the continued use of synthetic chemicals on farmlands, which destroy the habitats of these delicious insects. Winged termites come in different sizes, types and flavours and appear during different seasons, and their economic, social and traditional value varies from type to type as well as place to place.

Ntunda are small black flying ants with delicate feathers that normally emerge from knee-height anthills in the evening (especially during the rainy season in September); they are eaten fresh without cooking or roasting, only salt is added after picking.

Embobya have a stronger flavour and come out of the ground from small anthills after the rain stops.

Ennaka are very small black winged termites predominantly found in Bulemeezi county, and because of their flavour they are one of the rarest and most popular among all the edible flying termites. Traditionally, to trap more nnaka, a person could get three sticks, sit around the holes where the termites were coming from and make music for the termites to attract more of them out.

Nsejjere – also known as Kamaresi – are the biggest and fattest among the white ants in Uganda and make relatively larger, flat-topped anthills with wide holes on the sides that can reach up to 15 centimetres in diameter. The Nsejjere – reddish brown and black on top, with relatively large, hard wings and a fatty abdomen, which they lift up while moving – are considered to be the most delicious among all the white ant types. They are highly seasonal, appearing during the wet seasons in central and eastern Uganda, when they are harvested, cleaned, roasted, dried and stored for use in vegetable and groundnut soups and stews.

Mpawu in Luganda or Kamashwahi in Gishu are the second biggest after Nsejjere and they normally construct large and sharp pointed anthills with multiple peaks. They are also very seasonal, with their main season in April. They are normally trapped and harvested in the early morning hours from around 4 am and tend to come out when there is a dry night following a series of rainy days.

▶ Roasted, Boiled and Pounded Ants

Roasted Method

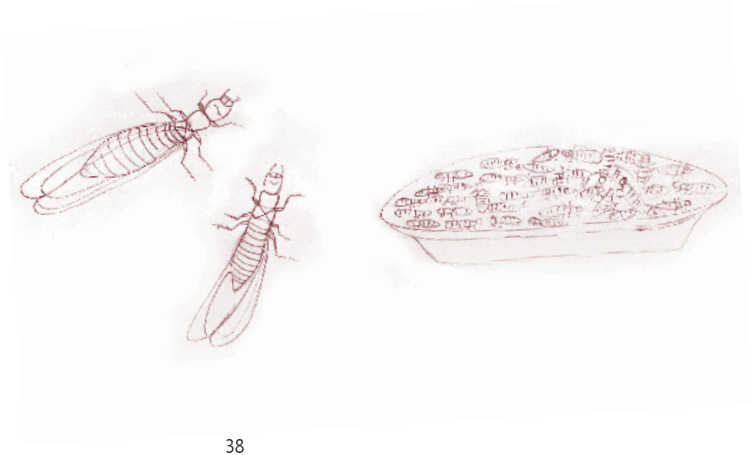
Place a clean saucepan on the fire and drop in the winged ants. Stir continuously for about 5 minutes using a wooden spoon. During this process, the insects lose their wings, which must be winnowed out. Fill a clean basin with water and slightly wash off the dirt from the dried insects. Remove and place in a clean dry saucepan over medium heat. Sprinkle over a pinch of salt and stir constantly for about 10 minutes. They are then ready to be served.

Boiling Method

Salted water is added before putting them on the fire. After boiling for about 10-15 minutes, they are sun-dried, and the wings removed. The insects are then ready for eating as a snack.

Pounding Method – *the most popular with the Baganda people*

Clean the ants by removing their wings and carefully pick out any foreign matter like other unwanted insects. Roast the ants and sun-dry them. The dried insects can then be pounded into flour and prepared as luwombo. This tasty and aromatic dish is best served with matooke or cassava.



Red Palm Weevil Larvae

Local name: masiinya

Scientific name: Rhynchophorus ferrugineus

A species of snout beetle documented in Uganda as far back as the 17th century still inhabits the wild palm trees found in the dense forests on Kalangala Island. These insects are eaten by the Ssese people, who live on the Ssese Islands in Lake Victoria. With the introduction of monoculture plantations for the production of palm oil, the native forests have been cleared, and researchers from the big palm oil companies are testing more effective insecticides to eliminate these stem borers, putting them at risk of extinction even though they are still a delicacy among the native families on the island. The adult beetles are relatively large, from 2 to 5 centimetres long, and are usually a rusty red colour with black wings. The neonate larvae are yellowish-white, segmented and legless and have a chitinous head capsule that is a darker brown than the rest of the body. The larvae are prepared fried and roasted, served as desserts and breakfast snacks. Masiinya have been described as creamy tasting when raw, and like bacon when cooked.

9 FRUITS AND BEVERAGES

Like other tropical countries, Uganda is blessed with a rich tropical flora that includes many different delicious fruits, for example, African elemi (mpafu), Ndiizi banana, passion fruit (butunda), sour sop (kitafeeri), false cardamom (tunguru), jackfruit (fene) and tamarind (nkooge). But the constant influx of non-native fruits, either imported or grown under very controlled and fragile conditions within the country, is coming to dominate the market. For this reason, Uganda's fruits have not yet reached their potential in terms of quality, quantity, productivity and availability.

Uganda is also Africa's second-largest coffee producer after Ethiopia. Even though some government bodies and international investors are pushing for high-yielding, more productive and less tolerant commercial hybrids, many growers have preferred to keep the indigenous and local varieties, which earned Uganda its current prestigious status as one of the world's leading coffee producers and Africa's biggest exporter.

Tamarind

Local name: nkooge

Scientific name: Tamarindus indica

The tamarind is a large tree that grows 40 metres high, wide and strong with an extensive dense crown. It has small compound leaves attached firmly to small hairy stalks. Its trunk can grow close to a meter wide. The tamarind tree is indigenous to Africa and is well adapted to the dry conditions in arid and semi-arid regions and woody grasslands. The leaves of this nitrogen-fixing tree are also used as fodder for ruminants. The edible part is the dark-brown, sticky, acidic-tasting pulp found in the pale-brown sausage-like hairy pods. These are cracked once dry to extract the pulp, which can be eaten directly or used to make juice. The pulp is also used to prepare millet meal in the Iteso subregion of Uganda's Eastern region. Tamarind trees are mainly found in the dry and semi-arid parts of eastern Uganda around Kumi, Soroti and Serere and in some districts of the Busoga Kingdom. There are a few scattered trees in the Nakasongola district.

Make your own fruit juices, choosing the best fruit from the market, and use fresh, local, flavourful vegetables to prepare meals for your family. Your cooking will be healthier and tastier.

Kisansa Coffee

Local name: Kisansa

Scientific name: Coffea canephora

Uganda forests are the homeland of Coffea canephora, better known as robusta, named for its resistance to disease. Traditionally, two native varieties have been cultivated in Uganda: Kisansa and Nganda. Kisansa coffee plants can keep producing for several decades, growing up to 10 metres tall, and are cultivated under shade trees, particularly bananas (the "coffee-banana system" has become common practice throughout the region). Traditionally, the beans are processed in a lengthy ritual. The pulp from the fruit is removed using two stones, and then the beans are pre-toasted in an iron pan. The resulting green coffee beans are then ready for the final roasting inside a terracotta clay pot, constantly moved around to stop them spending too long in contact with the sides. After crushing the roasted beans in a mortar, the ground coffee is finally infused in water, producing a beverage with an intense and balanced aroma, characterized by herbaceous notes. Before the arrival of British colonialists, coffee was consumed in various other ways in Uganda: as a fruit, as an ingredient in soups and chewed for its stimulant properties. Coffee continues to have a strong symbolic value in the local culture. Owning coffee plants helps to increase one's social status, and it is said that a bride who marries a coffee owner will be stable for life.

Nyassaland Coffee

Local names: Nyassaland
Scientific name: Coffea arabica

Nyassaland coffee is Uganda's oldest variety of arabica coffee, introduced to the Ugandan Masaba Highlands in Bugisu in the Eastern region in early 1900s and to Bwamba in the Rwenzori mountain range in the Western region. Nyassaland coffee is believed to have travelled all the way from the Geisha region of Ethiopia and was first tried by the British colonial government. It was initially grown in what is now Malawi, known as Nyassaland during colonial times. It should be noted that in Uganda, arabica coffee was first traded under the name Nyassaland, though it was later also marketed as Bugishu Local. The colonialists wanted to improve Uganda's peasant economy, which relied greatly on robusta coffee and some introduced cotton, and so this new variety which had economic prospects in Europe was also introduced. Today the Nyassaland variety is still cultivated by growers around Mount Elgon, where it is in competition with the new hybrid varieties, mainly the SLs and Ruiru 11, which are higher yielding. The Nyassaland arabica beans are slightly smaller than the hybrids but have a stronger flavour.

The Slow Food Presidia are projects for safeguarding local, traditional and quality products at risk of extinction. There are over 480 Presidia in 54 countries around the world. Uganda has Presidia for robusta coffee, Ankole long-horned cattle, the Kayinja banana and climbing yams. Discover them!

Green and Purple Passion Fruit

Local names: mirandano in the southwest, butunda obuganda in central Uganda and masaka local in Greater Masaka

Scientific name: Passiflora edulis

Mirandano is a local variety of passion fruit which grows well in the southwestern hills, elevated parts of central Uganda and in the mountains of eastern Uganda. Mirandano passion fruits are small and round with a diameter of approximately 4 centimetres. This variety of passion fruit is a long climbing variety, less aggressive in nature, with small, pointed and simple lobed leaves. They are green in colour when young and turn purple when mature and ripe, becoming softer, with the typical orange colour inside. The taste is sweet and less acidic. Compared to the early maturing hybrids, Mirandano are slow-growing fruits which take approximately five months from planting to flowering and an additional four months from flowering to harvesting. They are high yielding and highly resistant to diseases and also can survive well in wild environments. Traditionally the fruits are used for juice extraction as well as preserves, especially in the colder mountainous areas of Kabale and Mbale in southwestern and eastern Uganda respectively. Mirandano passion fruits are also commonly eaten as dessert with other fruits as well as added to a mixed fruit cocktail.

Together the food communities make up the Terra Madre network: groups of people who produce, process and distribute quality food in a sustainable way, maintaining a strong link with the local area. Buy their products when you can!

Where to Buy Local Products
CHEFS' ALLIANCE

The Slow Food Chefs' Alliance in Uganda currently involves eight chefs and two managers who are committed to giving value to local food biodiversity and the work of small-scale farmers from the Terra Madre food communities and Presidia in different regions of the country.

Harriet Birabwa
Bamboo Restaurant, Mukono
+256 782925292 +256 752925292

Betty Nakato
Mulongo Catering Services, Kampala
+2567 01115448

Nassozi Kezia
Dembe Catering Services, Mukono
+256 774380943 +256 782586620

Timothy Zimula Mugwanya
Kalya Courts Hotel, Fort Portal
+256 783407182

Magomu Esther
Cosy Point Restaurant, Mbale
+256 772532538

Naminya Saleh
Eco Shamba Cafe and Restaurant, Mbale
+256 772328085 +256 701260493

George Ntumwa
Ssese Island Beach Hotel, Kalangala Island
+256 754186814

Lydia Kyeyune
Black and White Restaurant, Kalangala Island
+256 788470924

Michael Kijjambu
1000 Cups Coffee House, Kampala
+256 772505619 +256 775667858
coffeestm@hotmail.com

Beatrice Ndagano
Beatrijus Catering Services, Kiwangala Lwengo
+256 703287653

Earth Market

The first Earth Market in Uganda was started in **Mukono-Wakiso** in 2015. The 43 farmers come from different food communities and are supported by the Slow Food Youth Network for the logistics and promotion of the fortnightly market. At the Earth Market, you can find a selection of Ark of Taste and Presidia products, indigenous seeds and food products and juices, as well as talking to Slow Food experts about agronomic techniques, beekeeping and other food issues.

Where: Mukono, in front of the Mukono District headquarters
When: Friday, every two weeks

Contacts

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sharedvisiom@gmail.com

John Kiwagalo – SFYN Uganda
+256 777535575
jonniekhe07@gmail.com

Rinet Nalugo Musana - Earth Market Committee
+256 752899743 +256 712870760
rinetnalugo@gmail.com

More Earth Markets in Uganda are on the way!

terra madre

Examples of Food Communities

BOCOVACO (Bogoya banana, vanilla, cacao, coffee)
in Bukunja, Kisigala
Joseph Kkonde Kigongo
+256 754054317

Bukunja Youth Producers of Climbing Yams
Umar Kityo
+256 779131224 +256 704600809
kityoumar@gmail.com

Apala Youth Sesame Producers
Lydia Moro
+256 783001152

Mukono Beekeepers Association
Prosy Nakisozi
+256 772888759 +256 751888759

DEL Women's Group
Annet Kyojjo
+256 777107396

Mihale Tubana Mixed Farmers
Khaukha Mutwalibi Magolofa
+256 773538788

ARK OF TASTE

Let's save the flavors of the world!

Thousands of fruits, vegetables, cheeses and animal species are disappearing, along with related traditional knowledge.
This shared heritage is also biodiversity and must be preserved.
Slow Food is collecting products from around the world aboard the Ark of Taste.

You can help too!

Search for products in your country. Help us to find and catalogue more!
www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en/what-we-do/the-ark-of-taste

JOIN SLOW FOOD

Promoting local and traditional food varieties and defending Uganda's food biodiversity

By joining Slow Food you will support a sustainable system of food production and distribution, the development of food education projects around the world, the promotion of food cultures and biodiversity and the pleasure of food and a slow way of life.

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+256 200906662 +256 392178204 (Office) - www.slowfooduganda.org - e.mukiibi@slowfood.it

Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity
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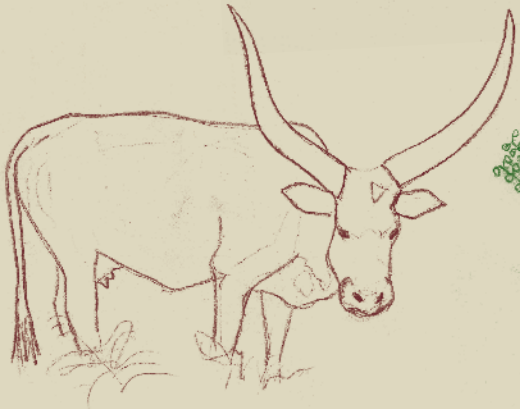
Slow Food International Press Office
Paola Nano - p.nano@slowfood.it - +39 0172 419645
To receive the newsletter with the latest updates on the Terra Madre network
and Slow Food activities visit www.slowfood.com



Uganda
From Earth to Table

Traditional Products and Dishes